DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

770.75/1

SEE 760h.75/181 FOR Despatch # 686

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED March 10,1938
TO NAME

1—1127 GPO

REGARDING: Possibility of Albania becoming a member of the Little Entente.

Mr.Mehmed Konitza came to see me and talked about the Little Entente. Asked if I thought Albania could be accepted into the Little Entente.I answered that I thought Albania would be welcome. I believe that Greece would be next to join; after a year or two perhaps Bulgaria would also come in: then we would constitute a real force for peace in most war-like part of Europe.I intent to discuss matter with King in next Audience.

esp

No. 686. Tirana, March 10, 1933.

Strictly Confidential.

SUBJECT: The Yugoslav Minister's Talk with King Zog.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

With reference to my despatch No. 661 of February 7th, I have the honor to report a conversation with the Yugoslav Minister, M. Djonovitch, in which he related to me the contents of his talk with King Zog on February 28.

The Yugoslav Minister said, in substance, as follows:

"I told the King about the telegram I had received from our Foreign Minister, M. Yeftich. The King assured me that everything possible was being done by

him

him to prevent any incident at the frontier. He said that, according to his information, the alarming reports of unrest in Northern Albania were not based on facts. I assured him that our information was quite authentic. I could not divulge to him the source of my information. I could not tell him that we have copies of telegrams sent in code by the Albanian Government to the prefects and officers at the frontier, and that we have the Albanian code. I know from these telegrams definitely that instead of cautioning the prefects and frontier officers against Italian provocation, the Government is asking for espionage information regarding the Yugoslav side of the border. If they asked me directly the information they seek, I would gladly give it to them myself.

"The King said he would see me again in about a week. The Italians are wondering why the King has received me so often of late. Either he wants to come to a better understanding with Yugoslavia, or he wants to make the Italians believe that some serious negotiations are going on between us with regard to a new orientation on the part of Albania, and he may be using me for this purpose. However, I have no objection whatever to being used in this manner. If he really desires a closer friendship with Yugoslavia, we would be most happy to arrive at an understanding with him. If he merely wishes to mislead the Italians into believing that he is negotiating a rapprochment with us, his purpose may be served and he may succeed in concluding better arrangements with Italy without making too

many

many concessions. That, too, would be a gain for us.

"In speaking to the King about the Ambassadors' Agreement, I said that if he continued to grant too many concessions to Italy, Italy would really have special interests here which she could employ as a pretext for coming into Albania and interfering with her internal affairs.

"Several days ago Mr. Mehmed Konitza came to see me and talked about the Little Entente. He asked me whether the Little Entente would accept Albania as a member. I answered that the door of the Little Entente was left open, and that I believed Albania would be welcome. When Albania asked for membership in the Little Entente in 1923 or 1924, Albania was not yet a consolidated State. No one really believed then that Albania would be able to establish herself as a well-organized, orderly State. Now I am sure the Little Entente would welcome Albania as a member. I believe that Greece would be the next to join, and after a year or two, perhaps Bulgaria would also come in. Then we would constitute a real force for peace in the most warlike part of Europe. I intend to discuss this matter with the King in my next audience."

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

Copies to Rome, Belgrade
and E. I. C.

HB/SJS
710

A true copy of the signed original.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

770.75 /2

SEE 875.51/183 FOR #340

FROM Albania (Bernstein) DATED Aug.16, 1933
TO NAME

1—1127

REGARDING:

Loan to Albania.

Statement of the Counselor of the Yugoslav Legation that Titulescu had sent a message to King Zog to the effect that if Albania would sign the non-aggression pact, the Little Entente would extend financial aid to Albania through the League of Nations.

WI

No. 840. Tirana, August 16, 1933.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: The Little Entente, the Litvinov Non-Aggression Pact, and a Loan to Albania.

875.51/183

ALE
770.75

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that the Counsellor of the Yugoslav Legation, Mr. Voukotitch, informed me that the Rumanian Minister, who has just returned from Venice and Paris, where he had conferred with Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Titulescu, has asked for an audience with King Zog for the purpose of conveying to him a message from Mr. Titulescu.

"Buzdugan told me in confidence that Titulescu had instructed him to tell King Zog that he could rely absolutely on the promised help from the League of Nations", said Mr. Voukotitch. "Titulescu is reported to have said that if Albania would be willing to sign

the

the non-aggression pact recently concluded by other nations with Litvinov, and if Albania would then address itself to the League of Nations for a loan, the Little Entente would be ready to advance to Albania about seven or eight million gold francs immediately. I don't know whether Buzdugan has actually received such instructions from his Government, but he assures me that he intends to deliver this message from Mr. Titulescu to the King."

Respectfully yours,

Herman Bernstein.

In triplicate.
Two extra copies.

HB/SJS
710

A true copy of the signed original. S/S

770.75/3

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Date 11/21/79

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NOTE

740.0011 Mutual Guarantee(Balkan)/11

SEE ~~770.00/296~~ FOR #112

FROM Turkey (Skinner) DATED Jan.26, 1934

TO NAME

1—1127

770.75/4

REGARDING:

Albania will not be included in the proposed Balkan Pact due to her special treaty relations with Italy, which might bring about intervention by Italy in Balkan matters.

Wi

Ankara, January 26, 1934.

No. 112

SUBJECT: The Balkan Pact.

770.75
2570

770.00/28

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I had a long visit with Dr. Tevfik Rüştü Bey, Minister for Foreign Affairs, on January 23, 1934, in the course of which he spoke freely of the much talked of Balkan pact which appears to be in process of incubation in charge of the Hellenic government. The Minister surprised me by mentioning that he himself had not seen the text of the Greek draft treaty but merely its projected terms. However, he was confident that the actual treaty would be satisfactory and that with yet a little patience it could be accepted by all the Balkan powers. "How about Bulgaria", I asked, and he replied

that

that even Bulgaria would come in and was showing a much more conciliatory spirit than heretofore. The Minister went on to say that the wishes of Bulgaria were well known but the pact could not take into account these controversial questions of boundaries and that the projected union would leave Bulgaria still perfectly free to maintain her point of view. Consequently her position would be in no wise weakened by joining up with Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia and Rumania for the common defense of their respective territories against any outside force whatever.

To my inquiry about the status of Albania, decidedly a Balkan power, he answered that nothing would give the other Balkan powers more pleasure than to include Albania, but unfortunately Albania had engaged in treaty relations with Italy, which in certain circumstances might bring about the intervention of Italy in purely Balkan matters and the other Balkan powers were absolutely determined not to become associated with any one or any group of western powers. What they wanted was to develop the Balkan States along legitimate lines and keep out of trouble.

I met the Albanian Minister within a few hours of this conversation and found him not entirely pleased that Albania was not even being considered in connection with the pact arrangements and quite well aware of the reasons for the exclusion of his native land. He allowed me to understand

understand that treaty or no treaty Albania felt herself to be a Balkan power and if the treaty with Italy should ever be invoked to induce the Italian government to attempt to control the Albanians more completely than they do at present the nationalist spirit would rise up to maintain the national government as a free and independent force.

Respectfully yours,

Robert P. Skinner.

710
RPS/rs

Copy sent Athens

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

770.75/5

740.0011 Mutual Guarantee(Balkan)/22

SEE ~~740.00/310x~~ FOR #50

FROM Albania (Wheeler) DATED Feb.10, 1934

TO NAME 1—1127 ...

REGARDING: Balkan Pact.

Albanian attitude as concerns -.

Wi

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

740.0011 Mutual Guarantee(Balkan)/46

SEE ~~770.00/776x~~ FOR #78

FROM Albania (Wheeler) DATED Mar. 31, 1934

TO NAME

1-1127

REGARDING:

Balkan Pact and Albania:-Transmits copy of news article on -, and discussion of interest of Albania in discussions held recently at Greek Foreign Office as to the Pact.

plc

770.75/ 6

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

770.75/7

SEE 770.00/348 FOR #87

FROM Albania (Wheeler) DATED April 12, 1934

TO

NAME

1-1127

REGARDING: Balkan Pact.

Albanian dissatisfaction with -. Albania will probably not participate in the next Balkan Conference.

Wi

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

770.75/8

SEE 775.00/23 FOR #14140

FROM Military Attache (NAME) DATED Nov.22, 1934

TO Italy

1—1127

REGARDING: Statement of King Zog as concerns possibility of Albania's joining the Balkan Entente.

Wi

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 875.0011/17 FOR #38

FROM Albania (Grant) DATED Jan.25, 1936

TO NAME 1—1127

770.75/9

REGARDING:

Marriage of Princess Senije, sister of King Zog of Albania, to Prince Abid, son of the late Sultan of Turkey.

Report on refusal of Balkan diplomatic representatives to attend the wedding, possible recall of some of the representatives and possible political results of the affair.

Wi

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Confidential for the
Secretary and Under Secretary.

No. 38 Tirana, January 25, 1936.

SUBJECT: Balkan Representatives Who Bolted the Wedding of King Zog's Sister May be Asked to Make Their Absence Permanent.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

Referring to my telegram No. 5, January 11, 1936, 10 P. M., and to my despatch No. 35 of January 12, 1936 regarding the marriage on Sunday, January 12, of Princess Senije, sister of King Zog, to Prince Abid, youngest son of the late Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid II, I have the honor to report that it appears likely that at least three Chiefs of Foreign Missions who bolted the wedding, following the lead of Turkey, namely the Ministers of Yugoslavia and Rumania and the Chargé d'Affaires of Czechoslovakia, may be required to vacate their posts here. No official statement

has

has been issued by the King or by the Government, the local Press out of courtesy to His Majesty and perhaps because of fear of the censor, has not printed a line regarding the hasty flight and sudden indisposition of five Balkan representatives on the eve of the royal wedding, and Dr. Aslani, Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is at Geneva, is reported to be engaged in "soundings" with representatives of the nations involved. Before he left Tirana, however, Aslani, conversing with me in the strictest confidence indicated the trend the affair is taking. He made it quite plain that the King and his advisers are greatly offended, and furthermore offended to the point that they are thinking of reprisals.

"Accepting a King's invitation and then refusing it just isn't done", the Foreign Minister declared. "Not one of these Ministers," he added in a tone that told of intense feeling about the incident, "said a word to me before he left. How can they ask for audiences with the King after refusing His Majesty's invitation to the marriage of his sister?"

Sir Robert Hodgson, British Minister and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, with whom I have talked several times regarding the matter, is of the opinion that possibly the only satisfactory solution is removal of the three representatives, who accepted His Majesty's invitations and then rejected them. In fact he has

said

said to me in the strictest confidence, of course, that he will recommend such a course of action to the King if His Majesty asks his advice.

It appears that the Greek Minister may escape the Royal displeasure as a result of a fortunate incident in that he had not sent his acceptance of the wedding invitation when the diplomatic storm broke and furthermore because, although he himself sailed away on the same boat with the fleeing Turk, he arranged to have his secretary, who upon his chief's departure became Chargé d'Affaires, attend the marriage ceremony at the Palace. The Secretary, socially ambitious, and probably acting under instructions, took full advantage of the rôle he was called upon to play. He appeared at the Royal Palace in brilliant uniform with side arms, arriving in the reception room after everyone else was in the line and then, taking a place at the head of the diplomatic line, pushed Sir Robert Hodgson, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, temporarily into second place. He shook hands profusely with all diplomats within range, including myself, and finally had to be escorted to his proper place at the end of the diplomatic line by the Albanian Director of Protocol. Even then however he managed to get himself in the forefront when the pictures were being made, completely blocking out the French Minister, a modest gentleman who according to the plans formulated by the Albanian protocol stood behind

his

his wife. If the Balkan Ministers who absented themselves from the wedding and as a result may be forced to retire from Tirana could have witnessed this scene I have an idea there would be other Balkan repercussions.

Nevertheless, the Greeks from a diplomatic standpoint have been clever. They have apparently performed the rare act of successfully carrying water on both shoulders. They went along with the Balkan Allies through ministerial absence from the distasteful Royal wedding and at the same time remained on friendly terms with the King of the Albanians through secondary but official representation at the ceremony.

While there have been many versions of this diplomatic incident which is unlike anything that ever happened, according to the historians of diplomacy here, it appears now that the affair climaxed the blunderings of many blunderers. Among the blunderers named are the Albanian officials who, it is pointed out, might have averted the impasse by giving more advance warning of the Royal wedding. Another is the Turkish Minister who, it is pointed out, could easily have slipped out of town without making a fuss about it, especially in view of the fact that he had already received his orders to go to Prague. I understand on good authority that the Albanian officials rather anticipated that the Turks would not feel particularly enthusiastic about the wedding in which the son of old Abdul Hamid was a chief participant. They would not

have

have felt badly had the Turkish Minister suddenly become "ill", or if he had quietly sailed away for Istanbul without saying adieu. The Prime Minister, Mehdi Bey Frasheri, expressed the thought when he suggested to Djonoviteh, the Yugoslav Minister, that Karaosmanglu might find it convenient to be "indisposed" on the day of the wedding.

Another blunderer, it is asserted, is the Yugoslav Chief of Mission, who played a leading rôle in the affair, perhaps to the extent of influencing the Turkish Minister to assume a belligerent attitude. As indicated in my despatch No. 35 of January 12, Djonoviteh informed me that he had approached the Turkish Minister regarding the matter and them had offered to act as negotiator with the Albanian authorities.

Still another blunderer, it is pointed out, is Titulescu, Rumanian Foreign Minister, who sent instructions to the Rumanian Legation which left no way open for a compromise and served to precipitate the crisis involving five Balkan representatives.

The Czechoslovak representative, Dr. Cermak, a kindly, amiable man, seems to be in the most unfortunate situation of all of his bolting colleagues for since he does not hold ministerial rank, being only a Chargé d'Affaires, he could have gone to the wedding along with the Greek Chargé, and furthermore he acted without instructions from his Government, in line with a general agreement that Czechoslovakia would go along on matters with

her

her allies of the Little Entente, Rumania and Yugoslavia. Cermak's wife is an Italian, which adds to his woes in this particular case. He said to me a day or two ago, almost tearfully, that his Government may now repudiate his act which he performed in good faith. There was a touch of pathos in his conversation when he added that his wife, incidentally a most attractive young woman, had laid her special clothes out for the wedding ceremony. Truly this affair has its comic side, but it has also caused many real heartaches. But there is one whose cup of pleasure slashed over, one who experienced"life's big moment"- the Greek Secretary !

Out of the maze of charges and countercharges, explanations and insinuations regarding the incident, one thing seems certain. From the standpoint of Albania there was nothing of a political nature in the marriage of the Princess to the erstwhile Turkish Prince. Zog, with one widowed sister and four unmarried sisters on his hands, was interested solely in releasing one of these from the Royal household. It is generally understood that the King would be very happy to have all of his unmarried sisters take husbands. These spinsters constitute a problem at the Palace. Furthermore since he has established a royal line by proclaiming himself King he naturally desires to attach the Princesses to males of royal blood. There are no Princes in Albania. His Majesty must therefore look across his borders for eligibles. And they are rare.

Prince

Prince Abid, Turkish political refugee residing in Paris, was spotted. He seemed to have the required qualifications, royal blood, Moslem faith, the latter most important since the Zogu family prays to Allah and looks to the Prophet. And so the affair was arranged and, it is charged, although not admitted by the Government, that the public announcement was made only a few days in advance of the date set for the wedding in order to forestall possible Balkan repercussions. The Turkish nerves, however, were more frayed than Zog reckoned, perhaps the result of the plot against the life of the President of Turkey in October.

Another thing seems fairly certain. The Italians had no hand in arranging the wedding, although as usual, they took full advantage of the situation when it arose as they did recently in connection with the anniversary of the death of the Queen Mother when they placed three wreaths on the Queen's tomb. Signora Indelli, wife of the Italian Minister, who shuns Tirana, came all the way from her parental home in Athens to attend the wedding. The Italian vessel plying between Bari and Durazzo, was held for several hours for the Royal honeymooners and when the bride and groom and high Albanian officials went on board the ship at Durazzo they were received and entertained by Italian officials, the entire Italian Legation being present. Italian hospitality so warmed the heart of the Vice President of the Albanian Parliament, Hikmet Delvina, that when

called

called upon to extend to the Prince and Princess the official adieus and good wishes of his Parliamentary colleagues he launched into an eloquent eulogy of Mussolini and Fascism, much to the discomforture and disgust, it is understood, of more conservative Albanian officials present, including the Prime Minister who subsequently made apologies to Sir Robert Hodgson, the British Minister and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, whom the Italian Minister had invited to the reception. Italian fireworks added to the gayety of the occasion at Durazzo and subsequently special train accomodations were provided for the Royal couple at Bari for the journey to the Italian border. Certainly the Italians are supremely elated over the way things turned out for the incident served to focus attention upon Italy as the genuine friend of Albania as contrasted with the unfriendly Balkan neighbors who would even spurn King Zog's invitation.

The incident has proved a most unpleasant and delicate situation for Zog, whose general policy has been that of playing one of his neighbors against the other and accepting help from him whom would proffer it. Italy has been the chief donor but Balkan influence in Albania is still strong; there are many blood ties between Albanians and neighboring peoples; many Albenians reside in Yugoslavia and in Greece; the old Turkish influence is still existent; and finally

there

there is distrust of Italy and actual unfriendliness on the part of the rank and file. The Albanian Kingdom is the taut rope of the Near East. Zog's balance is constantly precarious.

Respectfully yours,

Hugh G. Grant.

Copies to Rome, Istanbul,
Belgrade, Athens,
Prague and Bucarest.

HGG/kk
800.1/er 710

A true copy of the signed original kk

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 760h.75/213 FOR #162

FROM Albania (Grant) DATED June 27,1936
TO NAME

REGARDING: Balkan-Albanian relations.
Comments upon the undercurrents in diplomatic relationships between Balkan States and Albania since the successful negotiation of Italo-Albanian Accords.

770.75/10

lec

Tirana, June 27, 1936.

No. 162

SUBJECT: Italy Plans to Extend Her Roman Empire into Dalmatia, Albania and Macedonia, the new Yugoslav Charge d'Affaires, an Expert in Balkan Affairs, believes.

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to my Despatch No.142 of June 12, 1936, regarding the appointment of a new Yugoslav Charge d'Affaires at Tirana and the apprehension of the Yugoslavs concerning the Italo-Albanian relationship. I now have the honor to report that Mr. Miloje Smiljanic, until recently head of the Bureau of Albanian Affairs at Belgrade, has arrived in Tirana and has taken charge of the Yugoslav Legation, as Charge d'Affaires, succeeding Mr. J. V. Lioitich, who reverts to his status as first secretary. While the new Charge d'Affaires has said to me that his sojourn here will be brief, a successor in the person of a Minister arriving probably in the Fall, it is indicated

that

770.75

760H.75/215

that he may be here for some time. There are many undercurrents in the diplomatic relationships between the Balkan States and Albania since the successful negotiation of the Italo-Albanian Accords and as the result of the flight from the wedding of King Zog's sister last January of the diplomatic representatives of Yugoslavia, Turkey, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Greece (see my despatch No. 73 of March 21, 1936, and previous despatches). A policy of "watchful waiting" seems to have been agreed upon by Albania's Balkan neighbors. So far no ministerial replacements have been made and the Rumanian Minister and the Czechoslovak Charge d'Affaires are still here marking time in a state of disgrace with His Majesty, King Zog.

Smiljanic, the new Yugoslav Charge d'Affaires, an expert on Balkan relations, is here, it would appear, to keep a sharp eye on Italo-Albanian activities and perhaps to see if anything can be salvaged for his country from the wreck of Yugoslavian-Albanian relationship following the tragic culmination of Minister Djonovitch's regime. That he is not particularly optimistic, he indicated to me a few days ago in a conversation which was characterized by unusual candor on his part. Italy, he believes, plans to extend her "Roman Empire" eastward, envisaging the whole of Albania and ultimately large portions of the Dalmatian coast, now incorporated in Yugoslavia, and a gateway to Salonika and the Aegean Sea through Macedonia. The Italians, he pointed out, have already colloborated with Austria and with Hungary in

encircling

encircling Yugoslavia on the North with anto-strata highways designed for military purposes. Yugoslavia, he intimated, has a bad case of nerves over the rising power of Italy.

And what are you going to do about it? I quarried, to which he replied, "we can do nothing alone. We must have help." If France or England would take a hand, he continued, all would be well but this now appears to be a remote possibility. Greece is too close to Italy to be depended upon and Turkey's interests are in Asia and not in the Near East. "But", he added with emphasis and some enthusiasm, "if my country and Bulgaria can come to an understanding and collaborate, there is the solution. Our combined population would approximate 22,000,000 and we would have an army of 2,000,000 soldiers - <u>good soldiers</u>. Smiljanic, who spent several years in Sofia as a representative of his country indicated that efforts are being made to reach this understanding with Bulgaria.

The only obstacles in the way of bringing Bulgaria into the Balkan orb are some frictions between Bulgaria and Greece and slight misunderstandings between Bulgaria and Rumania. These, Smiljanic believes, can be removed. The Balkan Entente, he thinks, must keep a weather eye on Germany which is seeking to penetrate the Balkan States economically and politically, on Italy, and on Russia.

Respectfully yours,

Hugh G. Grant.

Copies to Belgrade,
Sofia and Rome.

HGG:gaj
710;701.1

Central File: Decimal File 770.75, Political Relations Of States, Relations; Bi-Lateral Treaties., Balkan States And Albania, March 10, 1933 - June 27, 1936. March 10, 1933 - June 27, 1936. MS Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan States: Records of the U.S. Department of State, 1930-1944: Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations of Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan States, 1930-1939. National Archives (United States). Archives Unbound, link.gale.com%2Fapps%2Fdoc%2FSC5111393541%2FGDSC%3Fu%3Domni%26sid%3Dbookmark-GDSC. Accessed 20 June 2025.